

# Parish Council of Coleford

---

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB  
Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council  
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428  
Email: [clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com](mailto:clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com)

In line with government guidance and recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable, it was agreed that this meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting using Zoom video technology.

## Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen (Part), Banks, Evans, Hanney (Part), Pearce, Townsend and Turner.

### 1. Public Forum

Cllr Evans reported that a car had been left on Church Street. It is taxed and MOT'd but is on a jack with the wheel removed.

Action: Clerk to report to the PCSO.

Cllr Hanney joined the meeting at 19.09hrs

### 2. Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Cllr Barrett, Conn, and Drescher all sent their apologies, which were accepted by the Chair.

### 3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none

### 4. Approve Minutes of last Parish Council meetings held on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

Copies of the abovementioned minutes were circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. It was agreed that both sets accurately reflected the meetings and were therefore to be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to ensure the Chair signs both sets of minutes and uploads them to the website

### 5. Matters arising

From the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> September:

PF 3 – Cllr Ham and Townsend to speak with Bo Walsh regarding the trees which had been removed at Roman Way which were allegedly protected by a covenant.

From the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September:

The Clerk to submit an application for a TPO to be placed on the Elm tree on Anchor Road as discussed at the previous meeting.

Cllr Townsend confirmed that the Doctors surgery will be erecting a waterproof shelter outside of the surgery to protect from the elements during the winter.

## 6. Reports

### 1. PCSO

No report had been received

### 2. Somerset County Council

County Cllr Philip Ham reported that the next couple of months are to be historical for all of us, Covid 19, Brexit with a deal or no deal, Unitary, but in what form are major issues. However this week sees progress with the Climate change Emergency strategy, 1st rounds of budget setting for next year which is looking more and more difficult by the minute, and at parish council level precepts will be more important than ever as in time they will be asked to do more. There are also many problems around planning, getting the Local plan II through, and the 5 year housing supply reinstated against a back ground of rising housing numbers from central government. Also a problem with phosphate and nitrates levels in the moors on the Somerset levels which Natural England are proposing to stop all developments in the catchment areas of the moors.

The following report was also circulated by email:

**Corona Virus Update:** In the last three weeks there has been a marked increase in the number of positive tests across the County but particularly in Sedgemoor and Mendip. As at 30<sup>th</sup> September, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 1,585 and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 206. The rate per 100,000 currently stands at 10.4 for Somerset (Burnley by comparison is 314). The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 6% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.1 and 1.4.

***It is vitally important to remember the Hands-Face-Space message.***

**Return to School:** The number of children attending Somerset schools reached 56,410 on 10<sup>th</sup> September (92.4% attendance), before dropping slightly and then fluctuating between 88% – 94.3% - explained in part, by the required self-isolation of around 1,409 children from six schools after eleven positive COVID-19 tests in mid-September. Separately, Electively Home Educated pupil numbers have doubled – the estimate for September is 200 in comparison to highest total in previous years of 92.

**2021 School Places:** Whether a child is starting school for the first time, or transferring to their next school, applications need to be made through Somerset County Council's website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions) the deadline for applications for secondary school places is Saturday, 31 October 2020 and the deadline for primary school place submissions is Friday, 15 January 2021.

**County Council Finances:** Somerset County Council's significantly improved finances have been recognized by independent auditors in their end of year report. The turnaround in just two years has seen the Council move from an "adverse" conclusion to "unqualified" – going from a very challenging position to the top ranking. The findings from auditors Grant Thornton say the Council has made "significant progress" over the past two years in improving its position. This means the Council is now in a strong position to face unexpected financial challenges. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic Somerset has been more resilient than many other councils regionally and nationally.

**£1m Climate Emergency Fund:** From 1st October, City, Town and Parish councils across Somerset are invited to bid for between £5,000 and £75,000 for innovative projects that can make a real difference in reducing carbon emissions and can contribute to making Somerset resilient to the effects of Climate Change. For information about the scheme, eligibility criteria and application process, visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency).

**Library Services:** From Monday 5 October iPads will be available to job seekers looking for an extra bit of help in their quest for employment. The free iPad Loan Scheme from Somerset County Council is designed to help people looking for a new job or career but who may not have the IT skills or equipment they need. The tablets which are pre-loaded with links, information and support for anyone in Somerset currently looking for employment are available for up to six weeks free of charge from Bridgwater, Chard, Minehead, Shepton Mallet and Taunton libraries.

**The Somerset Fund:** Grassroots community groups based in Somerset can now apply for grants up to £2,500 from The Somerset Fund. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) manages the Fund and is encouraging applications from community groups that run on less than £100,000 per year. The grants are ‘unrestricted’, which means they can be used to pay for ongoing running costs. Applications to the Fund through SCF’s website can be made until Friday 16 October 2020.

**School Transport:** Wearing face coverings on public transport services –used by pupils – is mandatory as part of the Government’s COVID-19 guidelines but whilst it’s not currently mandatory for pupils to wear coverings on dedicated transport all secondary age pupils who can, are now being urged to voluntarily wear coverings.

3. District Council

District Cllr Townsend circulated the following report:

**Full Council** - my appointment as full time member of the Planning Board was extended, and I am now a full time Audit Committee member

**Mendip Budget** – at a Training session on 12th October they advised that Mendip have a projected shortfall of £2.4M at Year End. Costs have increased, revenue decreased or deferred. Some of the shortfall due to COVID issues will be repaid by HMG but an exposure of c£1.3M remains, to be funded by Reserves. The budget problem for next year is no better. There was a very strong hint that some responsibilities would be passed down to Parish Councils to fund, especially as there is no cap on the increase in Precept they can obtain.

**Highways** – it was noted that when the Vobster road out of Coleford was closed the signed diversion to the north of the village was to turn left at Lipyate Cross, along Brewery Lane, then right along Charlton Rd. Clearly Somerset Highways take the view that this route is safer than Charmborough Lane. The issues caused by an HGV trying to use Church Street were well voiced on Facebook. There are 4 very clear warning signs already, on Highbury St, on Anchor Rd, opposite the Co-op, and below Douglas Yates Court (which was kindly cleaned off by a resident). These were erected after previous incidents and pressure by the Parish Council. It is not immediately obvious what can be done to stop anyone not smart enough to spot these signs - any suggestions welcome! District Cllr Townsend has sent a further chaser to Sara Davis of Somerset County Council Highways about HGV signage on Dark Lane, and have asked her to consider widening the restriction to cover Cherry Gardens Lane, Hoares Lane (in conjunction with Kilmersdon) and Charity Lane.

**Climate Change** – District Cllr Townsend learned that a Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal is to be carried out by Mendip to assess suitable locations in Mendip for solar farms or wind turbines. As this is part of the County wide programme I plan to ask that it be expanded to include sites for offshore wind in line with government policy.

**Unitary** - The Lib Dem majority on Full Council ensured that Mendip voted for the Stronger Somerset approach with East and West Somerset as the two Unitaries.

**Planning** - Prompted by the recent experiences with the 11 months’ timescale for the 63 dwellings at Coleford and now the 51 week resolution period for a single house at Budds Croft, Holcombe District Cllr Townsend is carrying out a review of Mendip’s recent turnaround times for applications. If you are aware of any other applications that appear to have taken an unreasonably long time then please let him know. Also we have been informed that the Planning Inspector will restart his examination of the Local Plan Part 2 on 24th November. Consideration needs to be given to the new Examination Document to assess the threat posed to Coleford by the need for the additional 505 dwellings in the north east of the District. Mendip have just been advised by Natural England that levels of phosphates in the protected parts of the Levels are in breach of international conventions. This could mean a halt to all new planning applications for housing and agricultural development on all land that drains down to the levels. The full implications are being carefully studied. Meanwhile some 6 weeks have elapsed of the 26 week appeal window open to Gladman.

Report from District Cllr Ham:

**Full council** – District Cllr Ham has been re elected to continue as Chair of Scrutiny, Equalities group, Access group. To join the Community Asset value panel and also the Covid 19 Town and Parish Emergency funding panel.

**Cabinet** - There were several papers at this months meeting of interest, further details are available on the Mendip District website:

- 1) Safe and Healthy homes policy
- 2) MDC response to the planning white paper
- 3) Council tax Covid 19 hardship fund.
- 4) Social depreciation programme developed by Scrutiny
- 5) Communities Climate and Ecological emergency fund
- 6) Funding Options for future corporate projects
- 7) Tourism strategy and plans.
- 8) Commercial energy contracts and movement towards renewable green energy contracts.
- 9) Financial future forecasts i.e. Budget shortfalls.

**Scrutiny** - Has been very busy recently with items such as the Unitary proposals of Stronger Somerset. Removing elements of the 5 council contract back in house, Deprivation and Fuel poverty, Bus usage and routes, cycling access routes, access to Doctors surgeries.

**Planning** - Local plan part II now scheduled for the end of November to early December online. The stopping of all planning in the water catchment area of the Somerset levels (i.e. West of Shepton Mallet) by Natural England due to High Phosphate levels mainly coming from water sewage treatment plants. Mendip District Council lack of a five year housing supply. East Mendip will now be under further pressure for housing development.

**Finance** - MDC finances are diminishing fast with reserves being used up, whereas SCC are increasing reserves from an all-time low in 2017 of 17m to looking at around 80m in 2020. There is thought as parish councils will need to do more thinking about their precepts and budgets going forward which will not be straight forward.

**Climate Change** - SCC Scrutiny Policy and Place have recommended the new Strategy to Full council for approval, this is a huge document, but there is a 20+ page summary document on MDC and SCC websites. It will affect everyone in Somerset and hopefully in the long term generations in the future.

## 7. Planning Applications

**7.1 - [2020/1377/VRC](#)** - Crossway Garage, Anchor Road, Coleford, Radstock, BA3 5PG

Application to vary condition 2 of planning approval 2017/0600/FUL for the demolition of existing garage building and development of proposed convenience store and 1 dwelling house with associated external works.

Cllr Allen arrived at 19.39hrs

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. Concern was raised over the number of applications that had been received to vary the agreed plans. This latest application was to alter the roof line to create a flat roof. It was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Banks that the application be refused on the basis that a flat roof would not be in keeping with the surrounding buildings and street scene.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions (District Councillors)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning office.

**7.2 - [2020/1860/TPO](#)** - Pennant House Church Street Coleford Radstock BA3 5NG

TP0 M1075 - T1 - Sycamore: pollarded to a 5m framework. T2 - Sycamore: Prune the end weight of the front most limb by no more than 4m will be removed without cut diameters not exceeding 150mm. T3 - Sycamore: thin the sub stem growing toward the neighbour's property in order to alleviate lean strain on the union. Approx. 20% of the leaf bearing material will be removed. G1- Sycamores: carry out a full formative thin by removing 20% of the leaf bearing material with cuts not exceeding 150mm, tend to lightly reduce the lateral spread of the trees where branch union with included bark are present

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was agreed that the decision should be left to the planning officer.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions (District Councillors)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning office.

## **8. Planning updates**

The Clerk circulated the information received from Mendip District Council planning office which confirmed that the additional hearings for the MDC Local Plan Part II will take place between the 24<sup>th</sup> November and the 4<sup>th</sup> December.

## **9. Update on Highways including:**

### **9.1 - Litter in Coleford / Charmborough Lane – Agree date for village litter pick**

Cllr Townsend confirmed that he had completed a partial litter pick of Charmborough Lane on Sunday morning when he had collected several bags of rubbish. He confirmed that he would continue to complete the full length of the lane over the next couple of Sundays when the road is quieter.

### **9.2 - Report of any new issues reported by Councillor**

Cllr Townsend said that Dark Lane had been closed due to a lorry becoming stuck – the road was closed for the whole day. Cllr Townsend will speak with Sara Davis of Somerset Highways regarding implementing a weight restriction from Lipyeate, Kilmersdon and the Newbury Road.

In light of the large number of stables located on the roads around this area it was agreed that Cllr Townsend would ask for signage warning drivers of horses using the lanes.

Action: Cllr Townsend to discuss with Sara Davis of SCC Highways.

### **9.3 - Discuss access and signage for Church Street**

As mentioned previously this evening, Cllr Townsend would discuss the HGV signage on Church Street with Sara Davis to see if anything else can be done to stop HGV drivers from accessing Church Street.

## **10. Finance**

### **10.1 - Clerks pay review**

Cllr Conn had prepared a detailed proposal outlining the Clerks appraisal and pay review which had been circulated to all Councillor prior to the meeting for comment which outlined as follows:

- 1) Each year the PC needs to update the salary paid to the Clerk and related payments for pension and National Insurance. There are two aspects to the pay calculation:-
  - a. implementation of the national pay award for the relevant salary point (automatic)
  - b. review of the salary point – the Clerk is appointed to a salary scale which includes the option of an annual move up (“increment”) by one salary point, until the top of the scale is reached.
- 2) Award of an increment is proposed. The chairman has summarised the reasons for this as follows:-
  - a. The Clerk has achieved far more than her formally written duties during the ongoing Covid 19 crisis, in support of the PC and Community.
  - b. The Clerk has dealt with a number of difficult situations, in an appropriate manner.
  - c. The Clerk has continued to attend training and the Parish Forum at MDC
  - d. The Clerk has continued to work out ways of saving costs, including sharing costs for the PC.
- 3) The date for commencement of the national pay award was 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and it is proposed that the increment be paid from the same date, as was done in 2019-20. This simplifies the calculations. The proposal is to pay at the new monthly rates from October 2020 onwards, meaning that six months’ back payments are also due.

- 4) Calculations were circulated in a spreadsheet. It was explained that for National Insurance (N.I.) payments are made by the PC, with the “employee” part of the payment then being deducted from the Clerk’s monthly salary, as for pension. In the case of N.I., two recent changes have meant that there has been some over-payment, as shown on the spreadsheet. The changes are (1) an increase in the threshold applied during 2019-20 after our calculations for that year had been completed and (2) a split in the threshold, so that different thresholds now apply to employee and employer payments. These changes have resulted in some overpayment of N.I., part of which has been refunded to the PC. To correct the employee over-payments, back payments need to be made to the Clerk.

It was recommended by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Turner that:-

- 5) An increment be paid to the Clerk commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, for the reasons set out above.
- 6) The monthly Standing Order to the Clerk for net pay be amended to £826.39, for the October salary payment onwards
- 7) The monthly Standing Order to Peninsula (pension) be amended to £242.01
- 8) The monthly Standing Order for National Insurance be amended to £32.66.
- 9) A cheque totaling £360.16 be paid to the Clerk for back payment of salary increase (April to September) (£305.96), refund of NI “employee” over payments from salary during 2019-20 (£24.48), and refund of N.I. over-payments April to September 2020 (£29.72).
- 10) A cheque for £79.80 be paid to Peninsula for additional pension payments April to September 2020.

All Councillors supported the recommendation.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to undertake the required adjustments to standing order to Peninsula and National Insurance and issue cheques as agreed.

### 10.2 - Consider quotes for new fencing around the hard courts

This will be an agenda item for the November meeting to allow the clerk to seek a final quote for consideration by the Council.

Action: Agenda item for November

### 10.3 - Accounts approved for payments

The following payments were presented for payment:

V Watts- Clerk expenses & Back pay	£ 46.38
HMRC – National Insurance	£ 20.08
Dagmar Hewell – Angels Thank you tea	£150.00
Geowhizz	£120.00
KSS CRC Ltd (BGSW Division)	£ 72.00

(This was to replace cheque number 2908 which had not been received/cashed)

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Banks that the payments should be made.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

## **11. Environment committee**

### Review grit bins, litter bins, street furniture to access condition

It was agreed that the environment committee made up of Cllr Evans, Cllr Turner, Cllr Townsend and Cllr Allen should undertake a review of:

- Grit bins – To establish condition and if they require refilling;
- Litter bins, Dog waste bins and benches – To assess condition to establish if they require repair or replacement.

This will ensure that all are in good working order and if not funds can be allocated for immediate repair or included in the precept discussion for the next financial year.

Action: Clerk to provide asset register. Environment committee to complete the review.  
Agenda item for the November meeting

## **12. Discuss and agree finger posts which need renovation**

It was agreed that the Clerk would seek quotes for the renovation of the finger post signs located at Lipyeate Cross, Newbury Lane which is at the junction with Highbury Street and for the post located at the junction of Charmborough Lane and Charlton Road. The Council is aware that this post is actually in the parish of Kilmersdon but Coleford benefits most from the sign.

Action: Cllr Ham will liaise with Kilmersdon PC to see if they are intending to complete the renovation.  
Clerk to seek quotes and make an agenda item for November meeting.

## **13. Future of the Coleford Royal British Legion building**

There has been talk within the village that the Legion is struggling to be financially viable. It is understood that it remains in the hands of the RBL at Pall Mall, London. There is a covenant on the land that says it can only be used for the purposes which it is already trading. It has been discussed that an application to make it an Asset of Community Value should be applied.

Action: Cllr Ham to provide advice and support on the Community Asset application.

## **14. Somerset County Council £1m Climate Emergency Community Fund**

### Consider submitting a bid

Cllr Conn had spoken with the Somerset Wildlife Trust who had confirmed that using the Climate emergency fund for employment was permissible and he therefore proposed that we write to confirm our support for their bid from the fund which was seconded by Cllr Banks.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Cllr Conn confirmed that he would also present a proposal from Coleford Parish Council at the November meeting for a grant from the fund.

Action: Clerk to write a letter of support to Somerset Wildlife Trust.  
Coleford bid to be included on the next agenda.

## **15. Review quotes for re fencing the Hard Courts**

The Clerk requested that this be adjourned until the next meeting to allow a third quote to be secured.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

## **16. Review opening of the Changing rooms**

The Clerk had received a request from the Coleford Athletic Football Club to allow the use of the changing rooms. After reviewing the Football Association website it was established that guidance is still for players to arrive ready to play and return home to shower and change after the match. It was therefore agreed that for the time being the changing rooms would remain closed but this would continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis. The Council reiterated that they had already agreed to complete a deep clean of the whole building prior to them being used. The contractor had confirmed that this could be done at short notice so would not be actioned until the go ahead for re-opening.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

## **17. Consider quotes to address drainage at Beacon View**

The Clerk explained that she had met with the contractors Richard Roch and Ben Windel who had provided quotes. It was agreed that Ben Windel would be instructed as per his quote of £250 plus VAT to clear the ditch of overhanging foliage to expose piped drain, chips to be left onsite. Once exposed the pipe will be tested for blockage with drain rods. Cllr Allen offered to meet onsite if he could be of assistance on the day of the work.

Action: Clerk to notify the contractor  
Clerk to follow up on the application to Land Registry to confirm ownership.

**18. Discuss replacing bollards with new**

The Clerk had received a quote for the installation of 2 new bollards from the contractor Ben Windel of £120.00 plus VAT which would not include materials. The Clerk reminded the Council that the quotes for the bollards were £39, £52.50 and £89 all plus VAT.

The Clerk had also asked the contractor to quote for the following jobs to relocate the dog waste bin on Anchor Road near the entrance to Springwater Farm and modify the latch on the newly installed litter bin at the Church Hall on Church Street for a price of £60 plus VAT

After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Turner that the Clerk would purchase 2 bollards from Bollards Direct at £89 per bollard and instruct Ben Windel to undertake the installation at the cost of £120 plus VAT as well as the additional relocation of the dog waste bin and modification to the litter bin.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to instruct the contractor and purchase the bollards

**19. Discuss Orchard Close allotment tenancy agreements**

Cllr Ham requested that this be carried forward to the November meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

**20. Discuss quote received water supply can be installed at the Goodeaves allotments**

The Clerk confirmed that a quote for connection to the water supply had been received from Bristol Water which totaled £1610.82 plus VAT. This would not include the cost of getting the supply from the pavement to the allotment which would also require permission from Mendip District Council or Aster. All Councillors agreed that these expenses plus concern over the ongoing costs was not something that they wanted to pursue.

The Clerk asked whether rainwater harvesting equipment could help with additional supply for those that did not have access to running water.

Action: Clerk to research rain water harvesting options for review at a future meeting.

**21. Discuss requirements for new Allotments**

The Clerk confirmed that there were 8 people currently on the waiting list. It was questioned whether the Council could apply to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency fund for a grant towards the cost of a new Community allotment.

It was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Ham that the Clerk should write to local landowners to ascertain whether they would consider selling or renting a plot of land to the Council for allotments. This would also be publicized on Facebook and on the village notice boards.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to write to landowners and ask on Facebook, On the Map and on the noticeboards if anyone has land that could be used as allotments

**22. Discuss plans for the BT Kiosk**

The Clerk confirmed that the BT kiosk was now the property of the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Clerk would consult with the village as to whether the kiosk should be relocated and what it could be used for.

Action: Clerk to consult with the Parish to establish thoughts on the use and potential location of the kiosk

**23. Consider SALC training opportunities**

The Clerk had circulated the latest training events and Councillors were encouraged to notify the Clerk if they wished to attend.

**24. Review future in person Council meetings**

It was agreed that in light of the recent announcements from Central government that meetings would consider via Zoom and be reviewed at each meeting.

**25. Correspondence**

Somerset County Council One Somerset meeting dates – 15/10/20 at 1pm and 7pm via Microsoft teams  
SALC Climate emergency training – 24/10/20 from 11am to 2.15pm. Cllr Conn to attend via Zoom  
Society of Local Council Clerks weeklong virtual Conference – Clerk to attend each day this week

**26. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion**

Cllr Townsend and Cllr Banks to liaise to ascertain how Remembrance Sunday will be marked in Coleford. A memorial wreath has already been purchased to be laid on behalf of the Parish.

Cllr Ham asked if we could offer a prize for the house with the best Christmas lights during the Christmas season to help bring some cheer to the village. Cllr Allen said that Time is Precious is organising something along these lines already.

Action: Clerk to contact the charity to see if the Council can help with a prize and report back.

**27. Date of Next Meetings:**

Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Planning Meeting
Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Small Grants Working Party meeting
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Parish Council meeting

